

SENATE BILL 2752

By Beavers

AN ACT to name a bridge on State Route 141 in Smith County in honor of the late Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree, United States Army.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree, United States Army, who lost his life on July 15, 1944, while serving in the European Theater during World War II; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters, Corporal Winfree did not shrink from serving in combat, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to fight the evil of the Axis powers; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree was one of many who gave their lives for the cause of Freedom during World War II and was the only one from the New Middleton community of Smith County to make the supreme sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, the namesake of President Woodrow Wilson, Corporal Winfree was a native of Smith County and grew up on the Dyer's Branch fork of the Mulherrin Creek. He graduated from Gordonsville High School and then busied himself in farming operations with his parents and siblings; and

WHEREAS, when the United States suddenly found itself thrust into World War II, Woodrow Wilson Winfree was one of the first to lay down his plow shares and enlist in the Armed Forces on February 24, 1942. He completed his basic military training and was quickly assigned to one of the United States Army's elite divisions, the 2nd Infantry, the Indianhead Division; and

WHEREAS, this Division soon was selected to be one of the Army Divisions to spearhead the invasion of Europe and went about preparing to do so. After rigorous training, the Division waded ashore the Normandy Beachhead on D-Day plus 1 and entered into the thick of the fighting to liberate Western Europe; and

WHEREAS, the fighting was fierce and the losses were high. As a prelude to a planned huge American offensive scheduled to begin on July 26th, the 2nd Infantry set up an outpost west of the city of St. Lo; and

WHEREAS, at noon on July 15, 1944, the machine gun squad of Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree pushed their weapons into position behind a hedgerow. As the squad continued surveillance, Corporal Winfree raised his head to ascertain any counter activity and became the victim of a sniper's bullet; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Woodrow Winfree's final resting place is in the American Military Cemetery in Normandy, which is located just miles from the place where he surrendered his life for the cause of Freedom; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree served with dignity, dedication, courage, and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Army, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Winfree's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow soldiers and his country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to name a bridge in the New Middleton community, where this valiant soldier was born and raised, to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the late Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree, United States Army; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bridge spanning Mulherrin Creek on State Route 141 in the New Middleton community of Smith County is hereby designated the "Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree, United States Army.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Corporal Woodrow Wilson Winfree Memorial Bridge". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the Commissioner of Transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.